

# LA CHAÎNE

MONTREAL D.I.Y. PUNK INFOLETTRE & SHOW LISTINGS

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## THE MYSTERIOUS ORIGIN OF THE SHOELACE HEADBAND

After I posted the Varning bingo card I made on 438punk.house, an online acquaintance replied to my post: "tell me about shoelace headbands, I am not familiar with this cultural form!" I realized I didn't actually know the story behind this iconic punk fashion accessory and did a quick search online, assuming that it would be easy to find some explainer article about the origins of the style. To my surprise I couldn't find very much, so I replied to my internet acquaintance that I would do some research and get back to them.

I first messaged d-beat historian and punk style aficionado Chrischarge to see if he had any insights. "I've just always seen them in photos of old Japanese and Scandinavian d-beat bands, UK crust bands" he replied. "I just think it looks cool, and you feel like a crust warrior when you're wearing one." Chris speculated that someone had probably just used a shoelace as a sweatband at one point (playing punishingly fast d-beat does tend to induce heavy sweating)—it obviously looked cool, and probably just caught on from there.

Local bad kid Sasha reinforced Chris' theory with some plausible hearsay—"most logical story I've ever heard is it's like 80s punks charging their hair with soap, and it was so if they sweat the soap wouldn't go in their eyes." Fashion meets function!

One of the very few internet sources I found in my searches, Reddit user dogfood666 says "I seriously call it my d-beat head band and started wearing it as a joke. I thought if I wore one I'd figure out what the hell it was but nobody could tell me, not even other people wearing it. We have no-clue what we're doing." Various other users on the thread referred to it as a "scandi-band" because they associated the look with Scandinavian d-beat groups. Additionally, an Urban Dictionary entry for d-beat notes "headbands of various types are often worn (usually to help keep up the charged haircut)" though this seems more plausible in the case of thicker headbands, which do also make an appearance in old photos of disrockers.

So while my search for an actual origin photo or story was not fruitful, my respondents DID provide lots of pictures of punks looking cool as hell while wearing a shoelace headband (dated as early as 1985), so I've included lots of those. If you are reading this and you have any insight on this topic, please get in touch!

by Taylor

## WHAT IS THIS???

Given this is the first issue, I figured I should write something about why I wanted to do this paper. I'm an anarchist, so my ambitions usually tend toward the unrealistic, but we fail a lot so that means I'm also pretty good at finding meaning in things even if the larger goals are a total flop. At the very least I can say that this has been fun and cathartic to put together! I hope my friends and acquaintances, who make cool shit or have important things to say will feel motivated to contribute and share their stuff. I also hope people go to shows, think about/listen to punk music critically, and get inspired to start more sick bands this winter!

More ambitiously, I think it's important to make space for dialogue and socialization that aren't as heavily mediated by profit-driven social media platforms. Not that it's possible to totally unfuck our ways of relating with a broadsheet, but I think we gotta take every small opportunity to wrest control of our lives back from that which seeks to hoard our attention and our time, make us feel bad so we spend money, and placate us while everything goes to shit. So here goes a modest and old-fashioned attempt to break out of the isolation and loneliness that so many of us have felt so acutely, if not our whole lives than especially the past few years...

— Taylor



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